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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Izenberg DATE 10/5/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☑ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
FA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

SAIGON 2131 7-2300

1. KISSINGER CAME WITH ME ON ONE OF MY USUAL CALLS ON THIEU AND BEGAN BY ASKING THIEU WHOM HE THOUGHT WOULD BE A CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT, ASSUMING THAT THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDED FOR A PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM.

2. THIEU IGNORED THE QUESTION AND BEGAN TALKING ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING THE SOLIDARITY OF THE ARMY AND THE SOLIDARITY OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES - BOTH OF WHICH WOULD BE CONTINUOUSLY THREATENED BY COMMUNIST INFILTRATION UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM. SOMETHING MUST GUARANTEE THE STABILITY. COMMUNIST INFILTRATION IS A DANGER EVEN THOUGH THE PRESIDENT HAS THE RIGHT
TO DISSOLVE THE ASSEMBLY, AND EVEN THOUGH THE ASSEMBLY IS ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE. MOREOVER, HE SAID, THE ARMY MUST NOT FALL AT ONE FELL SWOOP FROM ITS PRESENT POSITION OF RESPONSIBILITY INTO A SUBORDINATE ONE UNDER THE ORDERS OF SOME SECRETARY OF STATE. ALSO, THE ASSEMBLY MUST NOT HOLD TOO MUCH POWER AND THE PEOPLE MUST FEEL THAT THEY ARE PROTECTED AGAINST THE PRESIDENT BECOMING A DICTATOR.

3. THIS MEANS THAT THE ARMY MUST PARTICIPATE OFFICIALLY AND CONSTITUTIONALLY IN THE ACTUAL ADMINISTRATION IN THE WORK OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT. HE NOTED THAT IN KOREA, PRESIDENT PAK'S PARTY IS THE PARTY OF THE ARMY, BUT, HE SAID, THE VIETNAMESE HAVE NOT GOT THE TIME TO DO WHAT WAS DONE IN KOREA AND ORGANIZE A PARTY WITHIN THE ARMY.

4. THEREFORE, HE FAVORS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SENATE UNDER THE NEW CONSTITUTION WHOSE APPROVAL MUST BE OBTAINED FOR ALL BILLS TO BECOME LAW, AND WHICH WOULD CONSIST ONE-HALF OF THE ARMY AND ONE-HALF OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BIG MINORITIES. THE ARMY WOULD NOMINATE ITS OWN REPRESENTATIVES AND EACH MINORITY WOULD NOMINATE ITS OWN REPRESENTATIVE.

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5. THIS WOULD MEAN THAT THE ARMY WOULD NOT BE JOSTLED AROUND AS IT WAS UNDER DIEM. IT WOULD ALSO BE A BRAKE ON THE "TURBULENCE AND INSOLENCE" OF THE ASSEMBLY. IT IS INDISPENSABLE THAT THIS BE DONE IN A NATION THAT IS AT WAR, AND WHICH WILL NOT BE MENTALLY AT PEACE FOR FIVE YEARS AFTER THE SHOOTING STOPS. IN SHORT, HE THOUGHT THAT TWO PRESIDENTIAL TERMS WOULD HAVE TO GO BY BEFORE IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO REVISE THE CONSTITUTION AND MAKE IT FIT THE NEEDS OF A NATION THAT IS TRULY AT PEACE.

6. THE KOREAN SYSTEM, HE SAID, WAS APPLICABLE IN MANY WAYS, BUT THE VIETNAMESE SITUATION IS REALLY MORE DIFFICULT. THE PROPOSED SENATE WOULD BE A GUIDE TO THE PRESIDENT AND WOULD ALSO PROTECT THE PEOPLE AGAINST THE PRESIDENT BECOMING A DICTATOR.

7. AT THIS POINT, KISSINGER PUT HIS QUESTION IN A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT TERMS, AND SAID, IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE NEXT PRESIDENT WILL BE A GENERAL?

8. THIEU LAUGHED LOUDLY AND SAID THAT FRANKLY HE SAW NO CIVILIANS IN SIGHT. ONE CIVILIAN MIGHT ESTABLISH HIS PRESTIGE BY THE TIME OF THE ELECTIONS IN FEBRUARY OR MARCH, BUT HE DOESN'T SEE ONE NOW, AND IF THE ELECTION WERE HELD TOMORROW, IT WOULD BE HARD TO SEE ANY CIVILIAN. IN RESPONSE, THEREFORE, TO KISSINGER'S QUESTION AS TO WHETHER IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR A GENERAL TO BE A CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT, HE SAID, "IT'S ALWAYS POSSIBLE "(C'EST TOUJOUR POSSIBLE). WHEN I ADDED THAT IN ANY CASE IT IS NOT EXCLUDED (CE N'EST PAS EXCLU), HE THREW HIS HEAD BACK AND ROARED WITH LAUGHTER.

9. OF COURSE, HE KNOWS THAT WE KNOW THAT KY SAYS THAT HE, KY, IS PUSHING THIEU AND SAYS THAT THE GENERALS ARE UNITED ON HIM.

10. THIEU VENTURED THE GUESS THAT TRI QUANG WOULD START UP AGAIN AFTER THE SEPTEMBER 11 ELECTIONS IF A BLUNDER HAS BEEN MADE. HE DOESN'T EXPECT ANY "SCANDLOUS CHEATING" OR ANYTHING OF THAT KIND, BUT THERE MAY BE SOME MISTAKES AND TRI QUANG WILL BE THERE TRYING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM.

11. HE THEN TALKED ABOUT THE STRONG RESENTMENT AGAINST THE MILITARY WHICH EXISTED NOT ONLY IN THE UNITED STATES BUT ALSO IN VIET-NAM ITSELF. THIS IS ONE OF THE THINGS WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR THE FACT THAT THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE THIRST SO FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES. FOR 80 YEARS UNDER THE FRENCH, THEY KNEW NONE, AND FOR NINE MORE YEARS UNDER DIEM, THEN THEY HAD A SUCCESSION OF SO-CALLED REVOLUTIONARY MILITARY GOVERNMENTS WHICH GAVE THEM NOTHING SO THAT THE PEOPLE DOUBT EVERYTHING. HE THINKS, THEREFORE, THAT HIS IDEA OF HAVING ONE-HALF OF THE SENATE OF

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ARMY OFFICERS IS AN INTERMEDIARY STEP AS FAR AS THE ARMY IS CONCERNED, A COMPROMISE WHICH WILL SATISFY EVERYBODY. MOST VIETNAMESE WILL THINK IT IS BETTER FOR THE ARMY TO SHOW ITSELF AND TO BE RESPONSIBLE THAN TO BE SUSPECTED OF LURKING IN THE BACKGROUND AND PULLING WIRES. LODGE
RT

NOTE: PASSED TO S/S-O, WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA, 7/28, 10:50 AM.

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